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Notes of the Week

The War and German Reports

HERE has been a recrudescence of submarine activity, and neutral ships have been sunk as ruthlessly as British. America is so angry that some papers in New York are asking whether Germany is anxious to force the United States into war. The submarines have suffered, two being sent to the bottom by British destroyers in one smart little action. The misreading of a message made it appear that the German fleet was off the Belgian coast. Dunkirk was shelled, but, as it turned out, not from the sea. The shells came from the long-range naval guns at Nieuport. On both fronts Germany is claiming victories: the British have had to adjust their line outside Ypres as the result of the German use of asphyxiating gases; it is a purely strategic move. In the Vosges the Germans announce that they have retaken Hartmannsweilerkoff, but the French undoubtedly hold the summit. The really significant item is that the French have been bombarding the outer forts of Metz. On the East the Germans report sweeping successes against Russia in Galicia and an invasion in the north as far as Riga. Petrograd is unmoved and the reports, judged by the Russian account of the fierce fighting, are doubtless of the usual German official order. In the Dardanelles, where there is real if costly progress, the Australian and New Zealand troops seem to have covered themselves with hardly less glory than the Canadians at the second battle of Ypres.

Finance, Drink, and Supplies

Mr. Lloyd George puts the war deficiency for six months at the good round sum of £516,000,000, and for twelve months at £862,000,000. The present average daily cost is £2,100,000. This extraordinary outlay will be met in larger part by loans, in lesser out of revenue. Increased returns from exceptional duties put upon wine, spirits, and beer were not to be looked for. Prices would become prohibitive. Criticisms of the Chan-

cellor's assertion that drink among the working classes is a worse enemy than Germany herself have been so sharp and so general that the new taxes have been postponed—wisely as we think. In certain districts it is no doubt true that excessive drinking has involved serious shortage in the outturn of munitions. Admiral Jellicoe himself has been led to protest that supplies are kept back by the selfish indulgence of some workers. Unfortunately general charges cover the good as well as the bad. If true, Mr. Lloyd George's statements would justify prohibition; if partly true, then surely the evil could be met by local prohibition. The problem is so difficult, that even those who seldom see eye to eye with Mr. Lloyd George cannot but sympathise with him in his effort to find a solution.

Germany's Love for France

Germany's new-found tenderness for France is a subtlety which even those who have not had the advantage of a full course of Kultur will easily see through. As Mr. Alexander Gray in a brochure, "The Upright Sheaf" (Methuen, 6d. net), points out, the country which has hitherto regarded the Republic as the hereditary enemy and disturber of Europe's peace suddenly clothes France with something of the purity of Sir Galahad. The latest form of German solicitude has about it a touch of positive pathos. "Who knows if the French will ever succeed, without our help, in getting their English friends out of Calais again?" Dr. Paasche, the well-known German National Liberal, asks this solemn question in a speech which also reminds the world that Germany is fighting for the freedom of the seas. Once again we can only lament Germany's deficient sense of humour. To such as Dr. Paasche the line taken by a member of the Austrian House of Peers in opposition to the German theory of England's perfidy will seem mere stupidity. Without the intervention of England, says the Austrian peer, it is clear as sunlight that France would have lost everything, Germany's pledges notwithstanding.

The Belgians' Dire Need

Mr. John Galsworthy sends out an appeal on behalf of the starving Belgians which cannot be too widely heard. A million and a half of these unhappy people are at this moment in extremest destitution, and before next harvest time at least another million will be dependent for life itself on charity. To state the necessity should be to ensure response. Civilisation, chivalry, self-interest, all demand that the Belgians be helped, and the organisation exists to ensure that whatever is sent on their behalf is safeguarded from German appropriation. One penny in the pound of every man's income in England would be more than ample to save these millions of Belgians from the direst fate. "Pity ungilded feeds no starving bodies," says Mr. Galsworthy. Contributions should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. A. Shirley Benn, M.P., Trafalgar Buildings, Trafalgar Square, W.C.

To Re-Constitute Louvain

The decision of the Governors of the John Rylands Library, Manchester, to show practical sympathy

with the authorities of the University of Louvain by offering as the nucleus of a new library a gift of books to be selected from their stock of duplicates, will be eagerly supported. A list of the works forming the first instalment of the gift, and numbering upwards of two hundred volumes, was drawn up to accompany the offer, when it was made to the authorities of the University, through the medium of Professor Dr. A. Carnoy, who, in accepting, wrote: "These volumes will actually be amongst the very first ones, which have been effectually given to the future University Library in Louvain." Doubtless there are other libraries and institutions, as well as private individuals, who would welcome the opportunity of helping in the proposed reconstruction of the devastated library. The John Rylands Governors undertake to receive and to be responsible for the custody of any suitable works which may be entrusted to them. There must be many libraries with duplicates which could be spared, or even single copies which it would be a boon to make over to Louvain.

The Future of Constantinople.

BY J. ELLIS BARKER.

AT a moment when the Allies are attacking the Dardanelles and the Asiatic shore opposite by land and sea the future of Constantinople becomes a topic of immediate interest.

The nations have fought for the control of Constantinople and the Narrows which connect the Black Sea and the Mediterranean since the earliest ages. The mythical expedition of the ancient Greeks against Colchis to bring back the Golden Fleece and the expedition of the Greeks against Troy, described by Homer, were probably the earliest attempts to secure control of the wonderful sea gates which dominate the Black Sea. Ever since Constantinople has been fought for between the Eastern and Western nations.

Constantinople, situated in a most beautiful position and in a most attractive clime, has from the earliest times appealed to the imagination and the covetousness of statesmen and poets, of thinkers and soldiers. In 1807 Napoleon I. met the Czar Alexander I. on a float on the River Niemen, and proposed the partition of the world between France and Russia. However, when the Czar demanded Constantinople as part of the Russian share Napoleon exclaimed: "No! Who holds Constantinople rules the world!" Men are apt to repeat uncritically the sententious phrases which great men have uttered. The belief that the control of Constantinople carried with it the domination of the world has ever since haunted British statesmen and politicians and has led to a century of misunderstandings between Russia and Great Britain.

A glance at the map shows that Constantinople does not dominate the world. It does not even dominate the Mediterranean. It merely dominates the Black Sea. If it were true that the possession of Constantinople would carry with it the domination of the world the

former owners of Constantinople ought to have exercised such dominion. In reality, Constantinople, notwithstanding its commanding position, has hitherto been rather a source of weakness than of strength to its various owners. Russia requires the control of the Narrows, but the possession of Constantinople would scarcely increase her strength.

Constantinople and the Narrows appear small on the map, but they occupy a very extensive position. The distance from the opening of the Dardanelles to the outlet of the Bosphorus is about two hundred miles. Constantinople and the two Narrows dominate the entrance to the Black Sea, but that position itself is dominated in turn by the Balkan Peninsula. Constantinople, with the two channels which lead to the Sea of Marmora, needs a very large garrison for defence against an attack by sea and land. If Constantinople and the Narrows should be held by Russia, that country would be compelled to maintain there permanently an immense garrison. As the position of Constantinople is separated from Russia by Asiatic Turkey on the one side and by Roumania and Bulgaria on the other, the connection of Constantinople with Russia could only be by water and would be somewhat precarious. If Russia maintained at Constantinople a garrison of only 100,000 men she would weaken her main army by that number. Russia is at present almost invulnerable because her capitals lie far inland. By acquiring Constantinople, Russia would become more vulnerable than she has been heretofore, for she would have to defend Constantinople with all her might against all comers.

To most thinking Russians it is clear that Constantinople would rather be a liability than an asset to their country. Nevertheless, they wish to acquire it more for economic than for strategical reasons. While the possession of Constantinople is of doubtful advantage from the military point of view, it is of very great importance to Russia for economic reasons. European Russia is a gigantic land-locked country. Owing to its poverty railways are scarce. As practically all European Russia is an earthy plain there is no stone for making roads. Hence, the so-called roads of Russia are mostly tracks which become deep morasses in wet weather. Owing to the geographical position and the configuration of the country, Russia has to rely for the transport of goods largely on water. Her great agricultural districts lie in the south and in the centre of European Russia, and her gigantic rivers, the Don, the Dnieper, and the Dniester, flow into the Black Sea. The Volga flows southward into the Caspian, but it approaches the Don at Tzaritzin within a few miles, and a connection between the two rivers will before long be made. For Russia's exports and imports her southern rivers and the Black Sea are most important. Russia's chief exports consist of wheat and other agricultural products. How large the Russian Black Sea trade is may be seen from the fact that Russia exports on an average from the Black Sea as much wheat per year as do the United States and Canada combined.

For the economic and intellectual development of Russia free and easy access to the sea and to the lands

beyond is most essential. Hence, Russian statesmen have always dreaded the possibility of Constantinople falling into the hands of a strong Power able to cut off Russia's foreign trade either at the Bosphorus or the Dardanelles.

Turkey has blocked Russia's foreign trade and has thereby inflicted great damage not merely on Russia's agriculture, but on the whole body economic of that country. Hence, the Russian nation has demanded through its representatives in the Duma that the Government should secure Constantinople and the Straits for Russia. Perhaps it might be best in the abstract to internationalise the Straits in some form or other. However, experience has shown that an important strategical point can neither be safely entrusted to a weak Power nor can it be held by several States in common. A condominium, whenever and wherever tried, has proved a failure and a danger to the peace of the world.

The Worker and his Money

ROUND about the time when Mr. Lloyd George was polishing his platitude concerning the country's third enemy a Cabinet colleague of his was doubtless conning some statistics with which in due and proper season he was to astonish the few left among us old-fashioned enough to read the published reports of proceedings in Parliament. For Mr. Hobhouse—who, by the way, is Postmaster-General—was able to announce the other day that the worker is actually saving money, conduct, indeed, so alien to Bacchanalian propensities—especially when adequately developed in a wage-earner—that the increase of some three millions sterling deposited in the Post Office Savings Bank during the March quarter ought to have been regarded as a brilliant essay in fiction by a singularly unimaginative servant of the Crown. During the present year of grace we have that section of our population known as the working-classes banking approximately a quarter of a million of money more every week than they have done in the days when peace brooded over the world and Mr. Angell told us war was an impossibility, or something nearly as absurd. Were it not for the fact that even Mr. George has discovered he had muddled his percentages to achieve his too-sweeping assertions the humble prayer that sobriety in the use of intoxicants might be for ever banished from this land in order that prosperity might reign would be now stunning the ears of High Heaven.

The ultimate destination of these millions saved by workers offers fascinating themes for speculation. No doubt the inevitable working of the law of supply and demand, in conjunction with the series of industrial and commercial crises that must follow on the restoration of peace, will result in what, from the purely ownership of wealth aspect, may be regarded as inevitable—namely, the disintegration of these useful little piles. This, of course, is on the assumption that socio-

logically things will be as they were before the war, and even the most cautious speculator as to the future must acknowledge that this is a very large assumption. It is not improbable, for example, that even before the war is over we shall be furnished with cases by those newly rich of the feeding of pigs on pineapples, to apply an old saw to a modern instance. On the other hand, we may witness the effect, so long delayed in the case of the large majority, of that education so lavishly bestowed with such seeming little purpose upon that portion of the community it was once customary to describe as the lower orders. Money, besides being the root of all evil, possesses the curious property of acting as a cement upon otherwise loosely combined character, and this is especially the case when the money, representing in modern eyes an appreciable amount, has been actually earned. Again, it acts on the average man even if, from the standpoint of those who really understand what education is, he is only removed a degree or so from the illiterate, as a fine-mesh sieve in the matter of ideas. With money in his possession a very considerable percentage of our workers may be trusted to view life as a whole from an entirely fresh angle, possibly in many instances from a number of new angles. Money, or, rather, its ownership, unquestionably will rid him of many curious and crude ideas and ideals, and even its speedy loss would never leave him the man he was before his capitalistic era.

This war must bring about many changes which only war could render possible. Into the altered social fabric that will be evolved it will be interesting to discover the part that will fall to the lot of the no longer impecunious worker. Belonging, as for the most part he does, to what is usually described as the aristocracy of labour, possessing intelligence generally above the average of his class, he will speedily discover that the niches assigned him by mid-Victorian use and wont are not good for him. Industrialism is no longer the field for the small man's energies, nor is retail shop-keeping, as a general rule, an outlet suitable for the remunerative employment of his capital. If, however, he would allow the common sense which impressed upon him the desirability of saving the wages which exceeded his actual needs still freer play he might carry the lessons of his co-operative society successes into the practical politics of his daily existence, and recognising that in the larger spheres of international commerce and finance it is desirable to have with him as partners those whom in the immediate past his leaders taught him to sneer at as "capitalists" British industry and commerce might be reconstituted on an impregnable basis. For it must not be forgotten that there are hundreds of thousands of Britons learning new lessons, which far transcend any it has been the lot of their forbears to learn, in the battlefields of Europe, of Asia and Africa, and these men will come back determined to put these lessons to practical use in their civilian lives. With them the rest of us must co-operate, and in such co-operation the worker, whatever his task at home has been, must bear his part.

Signs of the Times

LITTLE things at times give rise to long trains of thought. There has been published the new and second edition of a small book* dealing with matters that have recently been forced upon our attention from several other quarters—namely, the garden and the cooking pot, their relationship and the art pertaining to both. The war has put before us new aspects of many old acquaintances. Our never-wearying friend, the theorist, has come forward with ideas on all subjects, from the proper conduct of the forces in France to the growing of French beans and radishes in our window boxes instead of the fragrant mignonette and glowing geraniums of yesteryear. Popular dailies are offering "fabulous prizes" for the most gigantic war marrows grown in the most diminutive backyards; the seed-sellers advise us to plant acres of turnips which we cordially dislike, and to supplant hollyhocks with Indian maize, which, however succulent a dish on its native heath, refuses, in our uncongenial climate, to arrive at a fit and toothsome maturity.

In the multitude of advisers there is more than danger of confusion, and it is a relief to come across a little book which combines in such sprightly fashion the most practical methods of outdoor and culinary production of vegetables homely and less well known. In the ordinary garden it is the element which is usually and curiously lacking, this rapport between the man at the helm outside and the woman who presides over the kitchen. Too often the vegetables appear to be grown entirely for his pleasure, without regard to numbers, proportion, or personal inclinations, while as frequently the English cook rarely troubles to see what is at her disposal in the beds, outside of the inevitable green stuff which supplements the boiled potatoes. There are other influences at work besides books and newspapers to remedy this deplorable state of affairs. In taking to our hearts the homeless people of another nation we have given a great impetus to the extension of the vegetable list. Scattered broadcast over the country are cottages inhabited temporarily by Belgians who are anxious, if other work be denied to them, to show what may be accomplished within the precincts of an ordinary cottage garden. Already curiosity and interest is aroused in the surrounding villagers. Different methods of planting, values of seeds, of herbs and plants are being eagerly discussed in broken English and the dialects of many home counties. The seed is sown, and, if the countryman be difficult of persuasion to any point of view but his own, it seems likely that the summer will give ocular demonstration of the quality of rival methods, and put things beyond the reach of argument.

Nor does it end here. In many localities there are classes being held for the cooking of those vegetables when grown, conducted by Belgian teachers. Their use time alone can prove, but the war will not have been

all loss if it teaches the ordinary housewife the economy, the wholesome savoury quality of vegetable fare, instead of the unending bits of bacon and bread and jam or margarine, on which growing families subsist year in and year out.

The chief objection to this class of fare in which the garden figures so predominantly is the amount of cooking it involves. Unwittingly the little book brings this into strong relief, and so proves the most conclusive argument against its own practical success, seeing that as a nation the English detest cooking. To them it is a necessity, obvious but painful, and to be got over with the utmost speed and decision; to the Frenchwoman, like the heroine in the garden annals, it is a fine art, worthy of the study, the attention of a lifetime.

He would be a great philanthropist who in this prosaic land of ours would endow a college for the study of the poetry of the culinary art. It is likely that such a course would lead the students away from the portals of the slaughterhouse to the precincts of the garden. Little romance has ever hung round the butcher's shop, and few have sung or painted its charms, though its brutality was once and for ever immortalised by the Caracchi; but the painters of still life, the inimitable Dutchmen of their great period, have proved conclusively the beauty that lies in the humble cabbage, in the savoury leek or onion, "the lily of the kitchen," to say nothing of the glory of purple and amber grapes, warm from the sun and luscious in their ripe and glowing bloom.

No one will deny poetry to the garden, and around the herb bed many a chaplet—pearls of verse—has been woven, many a tender and sentimental interest attached to its sweet-scented denizens. It is but a step to link this sentiment to the kitchen where all such fair growths are converted into food for the poet, for even he must have fuel wherewith to sustain the divine fire of inspiration! Some such feeling this little book, slight as it is, manages to convey to its readers. It lifts the act and necessity of feeding, earthly and gross though it may be, into range with the imaginative arts in which we take delight.

In the realms of fancy the ethereal and entirely blissful being is he who wanders at will in elysian fields, and, when the claims of appetite press, satisfies them by culling from the trees fragrant fruits and drinking at crystal fountains. It is not such a far cry as it appears to the well-kept vegetable garden and the kitchen where daintiness goes hand in hand with practical service, from there to the flower-garnished table supplied by a constant variety of fruit and vegetable, supplemented by just as much animal food as is necessary for unflagging energy in these strenuous times.

It is the variety which tells. In nothing more than in the cook-pot is it the salt of life. Variety of food and of ways of cooking it are the essentials of Continental cooking, and are becoming more generally recognised at home. One half of our population suffers in gouty and dyspeptic tendencies, in dental troubles, for the restricted diet and unlimited meat food of its

* *The Gardener and the Cook*. (Re-issued by Messrs. Constable. 1s. net.)

forefathers; the other half is laying up similar sufferings for generations yet to come. In the meanwhile the catalogues of the seedsmen year by year contain the names of new fruits, new vegetables—imported or developed—fresh herbs for the use of the housewife. It is to be presumed that many of these find their way into the garden, but few are to be met with on the tables even of the wealthy. One wonders whether the fault lies with the gardener or the cook. On second thoughts we would suggest an amendment—that the college which still remains to be founded should study as sister arts the romance of the garden and the kitchen.

A Good War Novel

IT is evident that our novelists are acting on the maxim "Business as usual" with commendable enthusiasm. Already a whole batch of brand-new "war" novels has made its appearance. Others, completed too early, have been hastily provided with "war endings"; while even serious artists have yielded to their publishers' persuasions and given their new books war titles. Since the papers which go in for literary gossip have been full for weeks past of anecdotes concerning novelists, male and female, who have proceeded across the Channel, the crop of topical fictions resulting from their experiences, which is likely to appear when the war is over, should put even the Daily Press to shame. The general character of the advance batch of war novels inclines one, it must be confessed, to view the approaching deluge with serious misgivings. The drivelling character of the majority of its competitors will at least serve to throw into relief the originality and sub-acid humour of Mr. Bohun Lynch's new story.* The very first sentences have a hint of mockery and a certain harshness of flavour that make them act like a literary tonic:—

"War is the ultimate triumph of the commonplace. All those things—deadly seriousness, deadly convention, and their offspring—have suddenly become more fearfully important than anything else on earth. Respectability, lack of imagination, solidity, stolidity, British this and British that—these are the crowning and indispensable qualities."

The story is told in the first person by an artist called George Roan, and relates the circumstances which led first of all to his refraining from enlisting, and finally to his tardy acceptance of Lord Kitchener's invitation. What causes him to hang back, and so to lay himself open to the attacks of white feather enthusiasts, is the fact that he has an "unofficial" entanglement. The whole episode is so natural, so unavowable, and so human that one feels the author must have gone to life itself for his idea. Nancy Binfield, George Roan's mistress, though she is rather an unreal figure, is still sufficiently attractive to enable us to understand his unwillingness to let her starve. The situation is, indeed, poignant and moving; and the whole effect of the outbreak of war on a man of

temperament and character, who has someone dependent on him, is brilliantly described. The pathetically inadequate cause of Roan's ultimate enlistment, the pang of wounded vanity which makes him end by leaving Nancy to shift for herself, is also admirably natural and well contrived. No mere outline of the plot of this novel can, however, give any indication of the richness of the humour and satire which are its most valuable qualities. Mr. Lynch's strong point is undoubtedly dialogue, and the conversations of his characters fairly bristle with good things. As a psychologist, though the teller of the story is well represented for us, Mr. Lynch is not so successful. The heroine, Nancy Binfield, is amusing and charming, but we can never quite believe in her or tolerate her Cockney accent. On the whole, she does not live, though her first introduction to the reader—when she succumbs to a bilious attack brought on by "an indiscretion of diet"—is altogether delightful, and raises hopes which are never quite fulfilled. Mr. Lynch, like so many clever writers, is quick at picking out human weaknesses, and is an admirable hater. He often gives the impression, however, of being rather a "surface" observer, or, at any rate, of being unable to see his characters in their entirety, the good with the bad. It is, perhaps, for this reason that the most successful character sketches in "Unofficial" are, on the whole, the unpleasant ones. Aunt Emily, who visits her wounded nephew in hospital and sits saying, "Isn't he brave?" or "That dreadful Kaiser!" until the poor man nearly expires with boredom, is a biting study; and so in their way are Mr. Victor Leathersell, the newspaper proprietor, and Binfield, the unsavoury poet who was Nancy's errant husband. The immaturities of "Unofficial" are more those of appreciation and sympathy than of style. Mr. Lynch can observe acutely, particularly men's meaner qualities, but he does not yet achieve the toleration which makes for real insight. He is inclined to judge hastily, and he often overlooks the inevitable complexity of all humans. If he notices some little snobbery or personal vanity in any of the characters he is engaged in drawing, he is inclined to pounce on this and exaggerate it till it occupies his whole attention. He does not seem to realise that the man who drags lords into his conversation may also be an excellent son to his mother.

These, however, are blemishes which will soon disappear from Mr. Lynch's work, particularly if he maintains his present rate of progression. Those who remember his former book, "Cake," will be delighted by the increased depth and maturity of "Unofficial." Its biting satire shows up all the false sentiment, shoddy thinking, and general claptrap which the war has occasioned; and it is in mocking at humbug and insincerity that Mr. Lynch shows himself at his very best.

Judged by whatever standard, "Unofficial" is an achievement to be proud of, but its appearance at the present moment lends it double value. The book marks a distinct advance on Mr. Lynch's previous efforts, both in style and in conception, while a thread

* *Unofficial*. By BOHUN LYNCH. (Martin Secker. 6s.)

of real poetry runs through it which shows itself in several beautiful descriptive passages for which nothing in his earlier work had prepared us. This poetic note culminates and reaches its highest level in the sentences which bring the story to a close. Here the author sums up his whole argument, showing us, in a final lyrical outburst, the utter triviality of warfare and the deathless permanence of beauty:—

"The lovely voice rose in the stillness, rose and died away. And then I knew that romance endured, that beauty was imperishable, and that nothing—not war, nor pestilence, nor encircling death prevailed: nothing was left but colour, colour and vague form, and rapturous song."

REVIEWS

Sven Hedin, Pro-German

With the German Armies in the West. By SVEN HEDIN. (London: John Lane. 10s. 6d. net.)

MR. JOHN LANE'S publisher's note to this effort of Dr. Sven Hedin's to whitewash Germany is not an apology for its issue, as it should be, but a not very convincing explanation of his reasons for becoming Dr. Hedin's impresario. There is, perhaps, one reason, which Mr. Lane does not give, but we do not mention it because we are concerned only with the reasons he advances. He thinks it well that we should be given the opportunity of understanding the sort of organisation and character against which we have been fighting for nine months past, as though anyone were in doubt on the subject. We should be duly impressed with this advantage if Dr. Sven Hedin's every page did not bear the stamp of official Germany. What he says is precisely what Germany wishes us to believe. For what other purpose does Dr. Hedin or anyone else imagine that a free pass was given him to go where he liked and see everything as far as possible in or behind the German lines? Mr. Lane makes at least one logical slip when he says that, as Bernhardt, Treitschke, and others have been freely published in this country, there is no reason why Sven Hedin should be withheld. There is, of course, all the difference in the world between the two cases. To read Bernhardt, for instance, is to get a real insight into the motives of the enemy. He enables us to understand what and for what we fight. Sven Hedin, on the other hand, comes forward as the third party, prepared to pledge himself to speak truth, and to show, out of the fullness of his knowledge and the completeness of his impartiality, that Great Britain has been led into a ghastly blunder. A good many people will be prepared to accept the statements of Sven Hedin who would not accept similar statements from a German. That he speaks truth of things and events he witnessed, we do not for a moment doubt. But what he saw was what it was desired he should see, and what, in fact, he himself wished to see.

To read this book aright, to understand its hidden purpose, we must keep ever in mind that Dr. Hedin has a profound mistrust of Russia. We get the clue to his real sentiments only when we have followed him through 300 pages of his book; they come out in the discussion with M. Cossart, the Notaire of Bapaume, who was, of course, strenuously anti-German. Says Dr. Hedin: "If Germany was crushed, I maintained, Russia would push forward to the Atlantic, and this could only be done over Swedish soil—across the Scandinavian peninsula, up there in the North. Therefore, for the sake of my country, I *could not* but wish for Germany's victory—a complete victory." If so naïve a confession appeared on the first page of this book instead of on page 304 the whole atmosphere of the volume would be clarified and intelligible to English readers. It proclaims the partiality of the witness, and it also explains the fears which Germany has endeavoured to exploit, though her success has not been so great as might have been anticipated. Then Dr. Hedin has been the recipient of gracious attention at the hands of the Kaiser, and Dr. Hedin is both human and Swedish. He gives a perfectly idyllic picture of the mighty monarch, next whom he sat at lunch; he became so absorbed in the Kaiser's words and personality that he went from the table actually hungry. We are free to confess that even in normal times the picture of the Kaiser would strike us as a little precious: "A fascinating and compelling personality, an urbane and courteous man of the world . . . a man whose quick intuition and superb powers of description reveal the observer and the artist, whose wise speech betrays the statesman, whose kindly manner betokens humility and sympathy, and whose military commanding voice indicates the master accustomed to be obeyed. Happy is the people which especially in troubled times possesses such a leader, a chieftain round whom all gather in confidence and whose ability no one doubts." The testimonial will possibly not be without its value to the head of the Hohenzollerns at this crisis in the fortunes of his house. We congratulate Dr. Sven Hedin on his recuperative powers; he evidently found the ordeal precedent to the arrival of the Kaiser at the Imperial luncheon table somewhat trying, but it was only a case of anticipation wronging reality. "Any feeling of timidity one may have had whilst waiting for the most powerful and most remarkable man in the world vanished completely, once the Emperor, after a more than hearty handshake and a cheery welcome, began to speak."

Such unblushing toadyism may do something in certain quarters to exalt the Kaiser; it will assuredly not redound to the reputation of Sven Hedin, whose good sense and courage have never hitherto been in question. Particularly touching is his assurance of the Kaiser's interest in and respect for France; how bitterly he must have grieved over the necessity imposed on him for bringing France once more to her knees, as he and his advisers intended in August last. Judged by the facts which Blue Books and White Books and other official records have revealed of Germany's peculiarly bene-

volent intentions towards France, Dr. Sven Hedin's account of the Emperor's views is screamingly funny—or must we accept as an alternative that this "most powerful and most remarkable man in the world" was merely a creature in the hands of his overweening bureaucracy? Equally absurd is the picture he draws of the chivalrous and humane attitude of Germany towards her enemies, an attitude which rather makes one wonder why Dr. Sven Hedin should entreat his German friends in Bapaume to show M. Cossart "a fraction of the kindness they have shown to me."

Dr. Sven Hedin's tone is anti-British throughout; as hard words break no bones, so friendly sentiments fail of effect when embedded in a boggy mass of hostility. His lectures to Great Britain are childish; his references to British soldiers are offensive; and his apprehensions as to the employment of British Indians in a European war leave us cold. The book is a proof of the inability even of men like Sven Hedin, who has seen the British Empire, to understand the spirit of the Empire, either in its Government or its subjects, white-skinned or dark. The book is one which will only be read with advantage by the public in proportion as the reader is informed of facts and capable of gauging the value of those relied on by its author for establishing his pro-German case.

With the Fighting Legions

Field Notes from the Russian Front. By STANLEY WASHBURN. Illustrated. (Andrew Melrose. 6s. net.)

At the Front with Three Armies. By GRANVILLE FORTESCUE. (Andrew Melrose. 6s. net.)

THE lot of the war correspondent in the present campaigns is not a particularly enviable one. Not officially recognised, and with all his dispatches severely censored, this unfortunate person, whose newspaper impatiently waits for reports of battles, details of engagements, or descriptions of events in the fighting zone, has no alternative but to make the best of a bad job, trusting to personality and luck to bring him through a trying ordeal.

Mr. Stanley Washburn's Notes, while not attempting in any way to give minute accounts of the fighting on the Eastern frontier, nevertheless convey a very clear idea of what is happening in the vast field occupied by Russia and her Austro-German enemies. As he many times points out, the eyes of England, and probably America, are so directly focussed on the long line of trench warfare in France and Belgium that the enormous task the Czar's troops have in Poland, East Prussia, and Galicia is sometimes overlooked. For these troops, composed of various races, the *Times* correspondent has nothing but praise. Russians, Little Russians, Caucasians, Cossacks, some "most extraordinary creatures from some of the Russian dominions in Turkestan," all combine in allegiance to the Czar and in fighting for the general cause—the ousting of the German intruder.

A very pretty incident took place before the Winter Palace at Petrograd when war was declared:—

More than 100,000 people of all classes and of all ranks standing for hours in the blazing sun before the building within which is their monarch. Quietly and orderly they wait, without hysteria and with the patience so characteristic of their race. At last the Czar, moved by the magnitude of the demonstration, appears upon the balcony overlooking the square. Instantly the entire throng sinks upon its knees and with absolute spontaneity sings the deep-throated anthem of the Russian race. For perhaps the first time since Napoleon's invasion of Russia the people and their Czar were one, and the strength that unity spreads in a nation stirred throughout the empire, from the far fringes of the Pacific littoral to the German frontier.

Although with the Russian staff, and naturally in sympathy with England's Allies, Mr. Washburn does not in any way belittle the strength or speak lightly of the endurance of the enemy, and, what is very pleasant to hear, he assures his readers that the atrocities perpetrated by the Kaiser's troops in France and Belgium have not been repeated in Eastern towns and villages. He has also a good word for the behaviour of the enemies' forces, the only point upon which he lays stress being the dissatisfaction of the Austrian officers and men with their German dictators.

Of the terrible devastation caused by the frightful machinery of warfare the author draws a vivid picture. To have an opportunity of traversing ground a few hours or a day after a terrible battle has been waged reveals to the observer the full horror of the present barbaric method of settling disputes. Peasants searching among the ruins of their homes, cattle straying over the ashes of what once were their sheds, are sufficiently pathetic glimpses to give pause to a thinking people, but when, after the battle of Ivongrod, "dead horses, bits of men, blue uniforms, shattered transports, overturned gun-carriages, bones, broken skulls, and grisly bits of humanity" strewed every acre of the ground, the sight must be one that a spectator can never forget, while the reader feels that those responsible for the war, if they have the slightest particle of humanity in them, must shrink from a picture so different from the eager crowds, cheering madly, when the Kaiser gave his address to the enthusiastic citizens from the balcony of his Imperial Palace in Berlin.

Mr. Washburn ends with a dispatch dated from Warsaw in January. Much has happened since then; other battles have been fought, many more lives sacrificed; but the story the writer tells is sufficient to show the good organisation of the Russian army, their determination to succeed, and their deep and earnest faith in their God and their Czar.

Following very closely the lines of "Field Notes from the Russian Front" comes Mr. Fortescue's book giving short sketches of events as far as he was allowed to view them from the Belgian, French, and German bases. Although a correspondent for the *Daily Telegraph*, his passport as an American citizen enabled

him to approach nearer to matters German than would have been possible to a citizen of the Allies; but, like all members of the unfortunate band of war correspondents, he complains bitterly of the censorship of their persevering efforts.

While claiming to write from the point of view of a neutral, and from a military standpoint greatly admiring the thoroughness of the Germans in all their actions, it is not difficult to see that the sympathies of Mr. Fortescue are with the Allies. He has many criticisms to offer with regard to the tactics of the various armies in the field; on the other hand, he fixes upon the strong points of each force: the wonderful German organisation, the superiority of the French artillery, the pluck in the face of fearful odds of the Belgian and the tenacity of the British soldier. The shelling of Reims Cathedral and the wanton destruction of Belgian property come in for severe condemnation, although Mr. Fortescue states that he personally could not find evidence of the many cruelties said to have been committed by the German troops during the invasion of Belgium. This statement is qualified, however, by the fact that the same facilities were not afforded to private investigators as were accorded to the Belgian Committee whose work it was to take up this matter. If any further assurance is needed the book testifies to the intense hatred of the Germans for the British and the difference in treatment meted out to our unfortunate prisoners and those from the French army.

A Companion to "Who's Who"

Twenty Years of My Life. By DOUGLAS SLADEN.
Illustrated by YOSHIO MARKINO. (Constable and Co. 10s. 6d. net.)

THE chief impression left upon readers who know the work of Mr. Douglas Sladen by this chronicle is that it ought to have been much more interesting, given the author's opportunities. He has tried to do too much, possibly, and the result is that he has constructed in the main an excellent catalogue of the people of note he has met in his wanderings and in his London life, with paragraphic particulars about them and here and there an anecdote, an item of curious information, or a good story. There are scores of paragraphs after this manner:

William de Morgan, the other novelist who achieved his first book success so late in life, was never at Addison Mansions, but I had the honour of meeting him at a much more interesting place—the little *atelier*, somewhere in the Kilburn district, where he made the famous lustre tiles by which he was known before he took to literature. George Joy, the artist who painted the famous picture of Gordon meeting his death at Khartoum, took me to see De Morgan, knowing how enthusiastic I was over the famous Mazzara Vase, and the other pieces preserved in Sicily of the old Sicilian Arab lustre ware.

"Famous" is used three times in these two sentences.

So many things and people are "famous"; so many writers are "one of the finest novelists of the day"; so many of the items are merely information, that at least half the book might well be recast and arranged alphabetically—it would then be very handy for reference, and readers could skip the paragraphs which did not interest them. Mrs. Woods, daughter of Professor Andrew Bradley, is "one of the best novelists of the day," and, in Mr. Sladen's opinion, "the best of all poetesses in the English language . . . in poetry she has the gifts of both Brownings." There is a lack of proportion here, and elsewhere; also we find a little carelessness, as in the title of "Paul Kelvin" for "Paul Kelter," Jerome's novel; "*mauvaise haute*"; and in such a sentence as this: "She has often done the *Saturday Westminster* and written many nature sketches"—we refrain from giving the lady's name! The illustrations, being by Mr. Markino, are, of course, charming in their colour, but he can hardly do himself justice when his themes are "The Dining-Room at 32, Addison Mansions, in which most of my books were written," "The Moorish Room at 32, Addison Mansions," "The Roof Garden of 32, Addison Mansions," and so on. His outline portraits of a dozen well-known authors are more successful.

The really good parts of the book are the first five chapters—which the author advises those readers more interested in his reminiscences than in his life to miss—dealing with his travels; the story of his connection with the Authors' Club, the Savage Club, and other centres of literary and artistic activity; and the account, with several amusing anecdotes, of "Who's Who," with which bulky museum of celebrities Mr. Sladen has been closely associated. On a prominent "authoress" refusing to fill up her form he wrote to tell her that he would be compelled to fill it up for her:

She showed no concern about this until I sent her a proof of the biography, in which I made her out ten years older than she really was, and said that I meant to insert the biography in that form unless there was anything she wished to correct. She then corrected it, and added so much that it would have taken the whole column if I had inserted all she sent.

The many pages treating of noted authors are, of course, full of "bits" that will entertain readers who like personal details, and there is gossip about all the clubs and their members in unlimited quantity; but the effect, as we have suggested, is very scrappy when continued for so long. At "32, Addison Mansions" most people who have made a name in the literary world seem to have paid a visit, and the "At Homes" must have been merry and exhilarating gatherings for years. Possibly this volume would appeal to us more consistently had its author restrained his impulse to set down every name he could remember, and enlarged, with a more careful style, upon a few of those who honoured him with their friendship, and a few, again, of those whom he was able so capably to assist in their first ventures.

Fiction

It is a far cry from "The Viper of Milan" to "Mr. Washington" (Methuen, 6s.), but Miss Marjorie Bowen's talents easily cover the distance. It is a little difficult to make up one's mind whether the interest which undoubtedly she commands in her new novel is due to its central figure or to the romance which she has woven about it. In any case, her success is certain: Washington, Braddock, Martha Washington, Benedict Arnold, Hamilton, Cornwallis, and the rest all make excellent figures in a story which is admirably told, and keeps sufficiently close to accepted history to leave the impression that the whole thing is a veracious chronicle. The novel will perhaps be more pleasing to American readers than to British, inasmuch as it conveys the idea that the rebels had all right and reason on their side and that the British were incredibly pretentious and wrong-headed. On the other hand, it shows what is no doubt true, that the obnoxious taxes were only the occasion of a revolt inevitable sooner or later. America was ripe for independence directly the French menace had been removed by the conquest of Canada. Miss Bowen has achieved such success as a story-teller that it is time she began to look a little to her style. The young lady's tendency to over-emphasis should be carefully watched, the meaning of words should be considered; for instance, "destined" is used when "intended" is meant; "compared to" recurs so often that we are inclined to become meticulous in our criticism; and the split infinitives are so irritating that even those among us who do not necessarily regard the infinitive as one and indivisible must protest. "To any longer curb" and "to any longer stand upright" are among the worst samples.

There is an old saw to the effect that two heads are better than one, and the truth of the saying is exemplified in "Where there are Women," by Marguerite and Armiger Barclay (T. Fisher Unwin, 6s.). For the impartial reader will unhesitatingly admit that it would have been a veritable *tour de force* for any unaided male mind to have produced this delightfully improbable Anglo-Indian romance, with its tortuous plot and thrilling situations which for extravagance can give points to the efforts of those earlier romancers beloved of our youth. So Daisy-Baba comes to the assistance of her Sahib, and the result of their collaboration is fittingly dedicated to two children of the Far East, Yaseen and Suliman, who it is to be hoped will not look too closely into the mouth of their gift horse. But such a record of deeds of derring-do, of hairbreadth scapes, is worthy of a wider circle of readers, and Mr. Fisher Unwin offers it at the usual price to a public jaded with stories of war, sexual problems, and tales of mean streets. The title is an alluring one, but we must warn the young man of whom the poet sings at this season of the year that "Where there are women there is always talk. . . . Where there are women there is always enmity. . . . Where women are gathered together there is trouble,"

for thus spake Kathbela, the Queen, and Narain, the Babu. Captious critics with the Gradgrind soul may consider this joint effort an utterly impossible story, may further qualify the authors' style as slipshod, and so dismiss the volume with faint praise. But those who seek only to be entertained will be wisely blind to its faults, and we venture to predict that it will be widely read for the sake of the diversion it provides for the not too fastidious reader.

It is not always that a woman's glory is her hair, especially in childhood's days, when the richest auburn is more often than not derided by youthful companions. Little Kate Whirl, the heroine of "Red Hair," by Robert Halifax (Methuen and Co., 6s.), is the possessor of flaming locks which would have won the heart of an old master, but which in these degenerate days subject her to such unmerciful chaff that she suffers agonies and becomes almost morbidly sensitive and reckless—to such an extent that she welcomes the advances of a dipsomaniac, Archie Lanphier, who, apart from a craving for strong liquor, possesses the art of fascinating an unsophisticated maiden. To this pathetic tragedy of hair and drink the author has added some subsidiary sketches, brimful of humour. His denizens of the meaner streets of Islington talk in his pages as they talk in real life, especially when airing their views on affairs in general over the fences of their back gardens. It is these light touches that will make "Red Hair" successful, and not the more ambitious sentimental thread that forms the warp of the story.

May

"THIS is the Virgin's month," the breeze
Has whispered to the dreaming trees;
And eager are they and astir
To put on whitest robes for her.

The brotherhood of elms now make
Triumphal arches for her sake;
Laburnums swing their golden bells,
And poplars stand her sentinels.

The chestnut knows her coming—he
Worshippeth in his bravery;
Others attire them in their best,
He makes a shrine with candles dressed.

This is the Virgin's month, when gay
The trees as children are, but they
Can never move from where they grow,
Never in glad procession go.

THOMAS SHARP.

Shorter Notices

Nature-Poetry

In the best and simplest sense the "Songs from the Clay," Mr. James Stephens' latest volume (Macmillan, 3s. 6d.) are nature-poetry. Again and again they return to the stars, the moon, the sea, the wind, the clouds, in pretty rhyming; and sometimes the reader feels that the verses are rather too pretty, too simple. With a true poet, however, we must not be too critical; if he pleases by his singing, and here and there wakes answering music in the soul, he has accomplished much. Some of these most taking lyrics are marred by curious perversities, such as the use of the word "the" as a rhyme, or the introduction of the uncouth word "walloped" into an otherwise beautiful conception called "The Nodding Stars." There is a quite wonderful poem, entitled "The Tramp's Dream," which reminds one of a certain story by Mr. Wells, "A Vision of Judgment." The Judge appears before assembled humanity:

... And as He walked in fire
Those million, million muzzles lifted higher,
Stared at Him, grinned in fury, toned a yelp,
A vast malignant query, "Did you help?"
And at the sound the jangled spaces threw
Echo to echo, thunders bit and flew
Through deeper thunders, into such a bay
The Judge stood frightened, turned, and stole away.

When Mr. Stephens has a fine central idea, his work is strengthened tenfold—the too obviously simple, in rhyme and theme, is his snare.

A Fair Enthusiast

Were Father Benson alive it is practically certain that he would be the first to smile at the extravagant eulogy bestowed on his memory by Miss Olive Katharine Parr in "An Appreciation" (Hutchinson and Co., 3s. 6d. net). Very little information with regard to Father Hugh can be gathered from this well-meaning little volume; that he shone as priest, author, and poet beyond the shining of ordinary mortals is insisted upon again and again by his fair commentator, but anyone reading this short account without previously being familiar with a fuller record, such as "Hugh," by A. C. Benson, reviewed in these columns a week or two ago, would be very little the wiser as to the actual part played by Archbishop Benson's son in the Church or the world of letters. Many passages, conveying little but the rhapsody of the writer, are to be found throughout the book. The following is a specimen of one of them:

Our friend loved weaving, and I love to draw the closest analogy between this alluring art and his own life as it was woven by the Master Weaver.

Or again:

From the year 1907 to the end was the most fruitful period of this beautiful life. During those seven great years his productiveness was superhuman.

Time will probably allot to Monseigneur Benson his just proportion of literary fame, but he can surely have no more enthusiastic admirer than the writer of this short notice—the lady to whom, before his entry into the Roman Church, he was given as a penance: for her sins she had to include in her prayers the supplication that three Anglican priests might be received into the Roman community. Father Benson was one of them.

The Theatre

"To-night's the Night"

THE Gaiety is reborn with a quite amusing salad of old French farce, lively new lyrics, easy-going comedy, jokes that are jolly, and a company that gives us of its very best. Mr. James Blakeley is full of fun, Mr. George Grossmith is immensely popular; all the ladies are gifted, young and beautiful, and determined to give the audience a good time. There is perfect sympathy between this and the other side of what used to be called the footlights, and there is a charming heroine, new to me, at least, Miss Haidée de Rance. Mr. Thompson has written the book, Mr. Paul Rubens the music and other things, and Mr. Greenbank and some others, I fancy—but it does not matter—give us charming lyrics. "To-Night's the Night" has been seen in America and also here under other names, and is just as old and fresh as the young laughter it creates.

Pioneer Players

LIKE all the performances given by this Society, "Exchange," by M. Paul Claudel, in an English version by Dr. Rowland Thurnam, is curious, bold, and free. Most of my neighbours appeared to have read the play and approached it with just the right spirit. But for the outsider, like myself, there had been printed a little explanation of how great M. Claudel's dramas were and a few words on the right attitude of the audience. "Exchange" is a wonderfully indirect affair and its four personages are by no means engaging as we see them with our free eyes. Martha, Miss Cathleen Nesbitt, is twenty-five and has married a boy of physical beauty, Louis, Mr. Eric Sroan. Thomas Pollexfen, Mr. Turnbull, who is always called by his full name in impassioned moments, is married to or living with an actress, Léchy Elberon, Miss Auriol Lee. When this lady makes love to Louis and wins him we are expected, however free our spirit, to sympathise with Martha, who explains in many fine lines the many fine things she has done or will do for the boy, who is about six years younger than herself. Louis prefers Léchy first, and then death, and he is the only person who is right. Martha was a country-bred bore who to please her own nature married a wild boy and then talked about her claims and proved very peevish when he wearied of her. This is very conventional, the one thing that M. Claudel, according to M. Georges Duhamel, does not exactly wish to be. But there are a thousand beauties in the play and some acute philosophy on the brutality of love, and, above all, there is the simple glory of the setting arranged by Miss Edith Craig. "America—the East Coast" is the scene, and how divinely beautiful that wide place may be in the starry night no others than those who saw "Exchange" on Sunday evening will ever know.

EGAN MEW.

The Royal Academy

IN the exhibition of the Royal Academy this year the best pictures are better than usual; and as for the rest, what does it matter in a collection composed of some two thousand more or less accomplished works of art if some are really bad?

For us, the outstanding personages of the year are Sargent, Orpen, Lavery, and some names which will not be generally mentioned—Mr. Elwell with his finely decorative "Old Stable"; "The Dreamers," or, much better, the wholly attractive "Garden," of Mr. Archibald Barnes; "Swimming," of Mrs. Knight; M. Leopold Pilichowski's "Festival in a Synagogue in Poland"; Miss Walford, fortunate in her sitter, with the picture which she calls "Aminta Busy"; and quite a host of others, such as Mr. Stott, with his beautifully conceived and sensitively carried-out "Entombment," or the dozens of not greatly advertised but admirable portrait-painters.

Then, Mr. Mostyn has a most beautiful "Garden of Peace" and a dramatic and less permanent "Flight"—full of women hurrying from a burning, tragic city. Personally, if one had any money, there are two pictures one would like sent home—Mr. Barnes's "Garden" and Mr. Spenlove Spenlove's "Belgium: The lowly born to share a nation's woe." This last is certainly the most inspired of the very many war pictures on view, some of which, such as Mr. Lavery's "London Hospital: The Wounded," a splendidly clever achievement, are worthy of so vast a topic. But the utter tragedy and quiet beauty of the interior of the Belgian church, with its three pathetic figures, rivets the imagination and holds the spirit in awe. After this gracious work one sees the multitude of canvases a little dimly, although Mr. Moira's bold "July Day" is fraught with fine colour, and Mr. Cyrus Cuneo calls us to gaiety with his delicious "Cigarette."

We are always hearing that Mr. Sargent will paint no more portraits. He has two, one of which is a splendid "Lord Curzon of Kedleston." But the gifted artist revels most completely in his Tyrolese subjects, of which there are several. "The Crucifix," one feels sure, he loved to paint, and more especially "The Interior," where he is most highly successful. Although so different, Mr. Sargent suggests Mr. Orpen, whose three portraits, "Miss Kitty Carstairs," "The Marquess of Headford," and the Marchioness, are all works which will delight future generations as well as our own. Seldom has the artist's mastery and cunning been so vividly displayed. I think the man the best painted; most people, at the private view, voted for the two ladies. Mr. Lavery has a wonderful picture of "The Queen" which will make posterity think that her Majesty's other painters were somewhat unsympathetic personages.

A picture more or less of the moment is that showing the meeting of King George and King Albert at a place near Dunkirk. The portraits, including that of the Prince of Wales, are excellent; the arrangement of the figures is good, the general effect respectable rather

than alluring. But Mr. Sims gives us that charming quality in some of his elusive, delicate work—"Syria and Pattatos," the decorative "Basket of Flowers," with its lively loves and "Pastoral." So, you see, there is plenty to engage interest this year at Burlington House—even without the fine sculpture, the miniatures, and many other things. EGAN MEW.

MOTORING

AMERICANS are finding Australia a good and growing market for the automobile. Since 1909 the value of their car exports to the island continent amounts to more than £1,600,000, indicating a wonderful proportionate increase over the figures for 1908, which amounted only to £12,125. Last year the American manufacturers exported to Australia 2,587 cars, valued at £446,694, as compared with 1,873, valued at £365,538, in 1913—an increase of 22 per cent. This shows that the low-priced car is gaining a strong footing in Australia, and should turn the attention of our own makers to the production of cars of a similar type. The fact is that the prosperous farmer there is finding the motor of great value to him in many ways. The distances which separate many of the holdings from the centres of population, the local markets, and the places from which the products are exported are quickly and cheaply covered by the motors, and they are put to a variety of practical uses.

In the interests of touring motorists the Automobile Association has made arrangements for patrolling certain beats from which the patrols were withdrawn on the outbreak of war, and further new stretches of road will probably be taken over later in the season, as occasion demands. The recent extensions cover several roads in the West of England, the Eastern Counties, the Midlands, and the Home Counties.

A short time ago the Association supplied 32 large reflex signs to the authorities of Phoenix Park, Dublin. These have now been erected on all the entrance gates, and are serving a most useful purpose by warning motorists when the gates are closed, and thus preventing a form of accident which until recently was surprisingly frequent.

The City

BUSINESS generally can only be described as dull. The City, indeed, is in chastened mood, and the only person who can regard affairs at all cheerfully in the circumstances is the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The sale of Treasury Bills under the new system seems to be growing in popularity each week. During the six days up to Saturday last 18½ millions were applied for—in other words, at the rate of over three millions a day. As the war expenditure is only some two-thirds of that amount the Chancellor of the Exchequer is being kept well in funds for the moment, at all events. For the general depression, uncertainty first as to what was happening on the Eastern front, and second as to what the

Budget would cover, has to some extent no doubt been responsible. Russia's perfectly frank and intelligible statement of the position in Galicia, and Mr. Lloyd George's financial survey have done something to relieve the tension.

On the Stock Exchange there has been no sort of life in any market. Almost everything has been marked down, with Canadian Pacifics taking an easy lead in the slump. Whether this is due to German selling in New York or to genuine fears as to the ability of the Company to maintain its dividend there is nothing to show. Canadian Pacifics are, however, by no means the only stock which has experienced a set-back in New York, and too much importance should not be attributed to what is probably only a spasmodic movement, hardly warranted by the proved earning capacity and the economical administration of the company. In Home Rails "Heavy" shares have recorded some dealings, but at lower prices. Oils lend no bright spot in the general markets, and even Rubbers refuse to look up, notwithstanding the really excellent reports which appear almost daily. Brewery shares were not unduly depressed by forecasts of Budget proposals, and have not improved now that the prospect has been cleared somewhat.

The Royal Mail Steam Packet's profits are down from £430,987 to £91,441. It has been a very bad year and the directors have had to take £200,000 from the reserve. But they are not unhelpful. They regard conditions throughout the year as quite abnormal, due to trade depression in South America, aggravated in the latter half by the war. Matters have improved so far as the company is concerned since January, and the directors are confident as to the future.

Interest seems to have been taken last week in the increase of capital by a little-known insurance company, the City Equitable Fire. The object of this increase is said to be to enable the company to capture some portion of the large reinsurance business hitherto done with Germany. In the past this particular business was regarded as unremunerative by most British offices, and it would be interesting to know how the City Equitable Fire proposes to improve its character. When the war is over reinsurance will find its way along the line of least resistance as of old, and what guarantee has the company that business secured in war time will be retained in peace? Reinsurance presents many knotty problems for British insurance men. Can the City Equitable hope to solve them where others have failed? "Sufficient for the day is the prosperity thereof" may perhaps be its motto. There is certainly plenty of good reinsurance business going just now.

CORRESPONDENCE

POETS OF PRESENT-DAY FRANCE.

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY.

Sir,—The note of criticism struck in your article on "Poets of Present-Day France" is the one for which some of us have vainly listened in quarters that affect literary discrimination, but whose guide is fashion flourishing and gilded. Are you not afraid of being unpopular, for, sir, you are undoubtedly old-fashioned? Latter-day men of letters have improved upon your slow and painful process of seeking beauty in literature; a very simple way have these gentlemen, and a short one. Without wishing to do them injustice, I would suggest that their method is something like this: Discover a maker of verse, label him "great," advertise his name, and stand aside to catch the critics' praise; then jointly advertise both

praised and praiser. Fame will be kind, and if her laurels be not gilded, she, too, must be unpopular; indeed, the same old hag that made the masters die before she deigned to notice them, in the days when art grew in adversity. Now art grows by advertisement, but scarcely attains maturity, for, like Du Perrier's daughter:

"Et rose, elle a vecu ce que vivent les roses,
L'espace d'un matin."

This is the difference, however: that the rose is often merely a weed, although the critics fail to observe the fact, but seldom seeing a rose. Permit me to return to your article in order to notice your appreciation of the poems of Albert Samain. You expressly exclude this poet from those of whom you say: "Their style is usually better than anything that they have had to say, and much that they expressed beautifully was yet not worth the expression." I am glad you exclude Samain, for to me and to many of my French friends "much that he expressed beautifully" was certainly "worth the expression." I think we should go far to find anything more delicately expressed and true to Nature than:

"Puis tout sombre et s'enfoncé en la grande unité,
Le ciel enténébré rejoint la plaine immense . . .
Ecoute! Un grand soupir traverse le silence . . .
Et voici que le cœur du jour s'est arrêté!"

It is unnecessary to point out that this quotation is from "Soir sur la Plaine," or to expatiate upon the vivid suggestion of the mystery and movement of a changing natural scene. The poet is, for the moment, the mirror focussing the aspect, and the vibrant medium, of Nature's evening hour; he makes us see and feel, even as he, the majesty and sadness thereof. Then, in the line that immediately follows:

"Et mon âme a frémi de se sentir trop seule." . . . he touches the chord, surely but with artistic restraint, that would thrill all humans in such a scene and at such an hour. To those who seek emotion finely and truly expressed one would commend Samain as head and shoulders above the many modern French poets of whom some "critics" prate.

I thank you for calling the attention of English readers to his qualities, even so briefly as you did, for in emphasising the truth about present-day French poets you do a service to France and to all of those who admire her wonderful literature. It is a pity our "critics" do not prime themselves with some of the older writers, taking a strong dose of Molière's healthy ridicule, so that they might with surer judgment appraise poetic values as distinct from commercial.

It is a far cry to old Tristan l'Hermite, but why not be gladdened by his brilliant line:

"Les songes de l'eau qui sommeille,"
and other lines of others of the earlier writers, to say nothing of the nineteenth-century men, rather than waste time and stultify taste by pounding away at the public in praise of petty poesies of no importance?

Trusting THE ACADEMY will shortly find time to purge English literature of current dross by similar sane and just criticism,

I am, sir,

Yours truly,

HAROLD BUTTERWORTH.

3, Kensington Park Road, W.

May 1, 1915.

OUR LIMBLESS SAILORS AND SOLDIERS.

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY.

Sir,—A great number of sailors and soldiers serving at the war have already been disabled by loss of limbs, and there will be many more before the war is ended. These

men are now being discharged from hospitals and returning to their homes or friends with their wounds recently healed, and without adequate arrangements being made for their future care and comfort, and it is pitiable to hear some of them begging to be told how they are to make a fresh start in life. The country owes it to these gallant men that proper provision should be made for them, that they should be cared for until they have fully recovered their strength and nerve, and learned how to use their new limbs, so as to become capable of taking up employment again in the form best suited to each individual. This cannot be done in existing hospitals.

In order to deal with this pressing difficulty, and as the result of a letter we recently addressed to the Press, a committee has been formed with the gracious approval of H.M. the Queen and with the sanction of the Directors-General of the Navy and Army Medical Services, and steps will be taken immediately to establish one or more Convalescent Auxiliary Hospitals (including an officers' branch) where these poor fellows may be concentrated, and where they can get fitted and accustomed to their artificial limbs under the best possible conditions—with the advice and assistance of several eminent orthopaedic surgeons who have generously offered their services in support of the scheme. Application is being made to the Committee of the Prince of Wales' Fund for a grant to assist us in carrying out this special work, and we feel sure that an ever-generous public will also readily respond to our appeal and contribute towards the fund necessary to deal with this most urgent problem. All communications and donations should be addressed to C. H. Kenderdine, Esq., St. Stephen's House, Westminster, S.W. (marked "Auxiliary Hospital").

Yours obediently,

KATHLEEN FALMOUTH,
M. E. GWYNNE HOLFORD.

April 30, 1915.

THE ETYMOLOGY OF "SOLENT."

To the Editor of THE ACADEMY.

Sir,—There are two solutions given in Canon Taylor's "Names and their Histories" of the etymology of "Solent": (1) From Celtic *sul-want*, i.e., "the struggle of the *sul*" (the salt-water or incoming tide). In "Sol-way" the first syllable has the same signification; (2) from *sul-gwent*, i.e., "the sea of Gwent," Gwent probably denoting Hampshire.

I am afraid Mr. E. S. Dodgson's derivation from Greek *σωλήν*, a pipe or channel, though ingenious, cannot be sustained by reference to early Latin or Saxon writers. Bede supposes a Latin derivation, and calls this arm of the sea, Solvente, the "sea where two ocean currents meet and conflict." The final *t* is almost certainly not excrecent, as in "margent" and "tyrant," but part of the original form, as in "Derwent," "Tranent," etc. To derive Solent from *σωλήν* would be about as serious a mistake as to trace the North American river name Potomac to Greek *ποταμός*, a river.

I am, sir, etc.,
N. W. H.

April 30.

BOOKS RECEIVED

FICTION.

- The Wizard of the Turf.* By Nat Gould. (John Long. 6s.)
The Snake Garden. By Amy J. Baker. (John Long. 6s.)
Unofficial. By Bohun Lynch. (Martin Secker. 6s.)
Co-Directors. By Una L. Silberrad. (Hodder and Stoughton. 6s.)

- The Teeth of the Tiger.* By Maurice Leblanc. (Hurst and Blackett. 6s.)
The Miracle of Love. By Cosmo Hamilton. (Hurst and Blackett. 6s.)
The Mysterious Three. By William le Queux. (Ward, Lock and Co. 6s.)
The Kiss, and Other Stories. By Anton Tchekhoff. Translated from the Russian by R. E. C. Long. (Duckworth and Co. 2s. 6d. net.)
Her Measure. By Curtis Yorke. (Hutchinson and Co. 6s.)
A Lady of Russia. By Robert Bowman. (Wm. Heinemann. 6s.)
Kitchener's Chaps. By A. Neil Lyons. (John Lane. 1s. net.)

HISTORY, BIOGRAPHY, AND MEMOIRS.

- History of the War.* Vol. III. By John Buchan. (T. Nelson and Sons. 1s. net.)
Juliette Drouet's Love-Letters to Victor Hugo. Edited with a Biography of Juliette Drouet by Louis Guimbaud. Illustrated. (Stanley Paul and Co. 10s. 6d. net.)
A Short History of Belgium and Holland. By Alexander Young. (T. Fisher Unwin. 5s. net.)
A History of Persia. By Lieut.-Col. P. M. Sykes, C.M.G., C.I.E. With Maps and Illustrations. Two Vols. (Macmillan and Co. 50s. net.)

VERSE.

- Straight and Crooked.* By J. H. Cousins. (Grant Richards. 1s. 6d. net.)

MISCELLANEOUS.

- Three Little Dramas: Alladine and Palomides; Interior; The Death of Tintagiles.* By M. Maeterlinck. (Duckworth and Co. 2s.)
Plays: The Black Maskers; The Life of Man; The Sabin Women. By Leonid Andreyeff. Translated from the Russian by C. L. Meader and F. N. Scott. (Duckworth and Co. 6s.)
Foundations of National Greatness: A Scheme of Study. By Wm. Chas. Braithwaite, B.A., LL.B. (National Adult School Union. 1s. net.)
The Development and Properties of Raw Cotton. By W. L. Balls, M.A. (A. and C. Black. 5s. net.)
Individuality. By C. F. Annesley Voysey. (Chapman and Hall. 3s. 6d. net.)
Quaker Women. By M. R. Brailsford. (Duckworth and Co. 7s. 6d. net.)
War, Progress, and the End of History: Including a Short Story of the Anti-Christ. Three Discussions by Vladimir Soloviev. (Hodder and Stoughton. 6s. net.)
Clear Waters: Troutling Days and Troutling Ways in Wales, the West Country, and the Scottish Borderland. By A. G. Bradley. (Constable and Co. 7s. 6d. net.)
Twenty Years of My Life. By Douglas Sladen. Illustrated by Yoshio Markino. (Constable and Co. 10s. 6d. net.)
The Romance of a Favourite. By Frédéric Loliée. A Reissue. Illustrated. (Constable and Co. 3s. 6d. net.)
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